



Challenges of Older People in Technological Disaster

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Background & Object :

As global aging progresses, disaster preparedness and resiliency for older people is becoming an issue because their special needs have not been well accommodated in the case of disaster relief.

Technological disasters such as nuclear power have a long-term impact on the health of the affected population than natural disasters.

This study aims to analyze the challenges of older people in a technological disaster situation.

Methods: The study was conducted in X city of Tokyo where older people have been evacuated from severely affected areas as it impacted the nuclear power plants. Older evacuees in X city were living in private apartments, public apartments, or family houses. Each evacuee did not get information about where their community members were living or refuge. Data was collected between May and June 2014. A structured questionnaire, with multiple choice, was carried out with 12 older people. Information was gathered through self-reported questionnaires by postal mail. Questionnaires addressed the feeling that life is worth living and social relationships and using instrumental activities of daily living (IADL) indicators. The protocol was approved by the Institutional Review Boards at Japanese Red Cross College of Nursing.

Results: The number of respondents was twelve. Five males and seven females of them. Half of the respondents were aged 70-79 years, one respondent was 60 years or over, four respondents were 80-89 years, and only one respondent was 90 years or over. Only one respondent did not change about the feeling that life is worth living, decreased compared to before refuge. Nine responses decreased their feeling of well-being in the present life, especially compared to before refuge. And four males and two female respondents lost the chance to visit their friends each other, and three males and two female respondents had not given advice for their family members or friends.

Conclusion: This study showed that emergency situations disrupt social relationships, leaving older people at risk for isolation. This pointed out that the distraction of family and community is viewed by older people as the most important unit of social support in daily living.

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	Before Disaster N=12		After Disaster (now) N=12	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Good Feeling of well-being	4	7	1	1
Having chance to visit your friends	5	6	1	4